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Message Text

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17
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /115 W
---------- 046967
R 081715Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8351
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1581

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PFOR SOCI SP VT
SUBJECT: CHURCH-STATE CRISIS OVER BILBAO BISHOP ANOVEROS

REF: (A) MADRID 1370; (B) MADRID 1433; (C) MADRID 1470; (D) ROME 2993; (E) ROME 3057

1. DURING PAST FEW DAYS SERIOUS CRISIS IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS OVER FATE OF BILBAO BISHOP ANOVEROS, WHICH SPARKED BY HIS NOW-FAMOUS PASTORAL LETTER (REF A), HAS CONTINUED UNCHANGED, AMID EXTENSIVE AND CONTINUING NEGOTIATION ATTEMPTS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS, WHICH INCLUDED INTERVIEW OF CARDINAL PRIMATE GONZALEZ WITH FRANCO (REF C), AND MORE RECENT INTERVIEWS BY CARDINAL TARANCON AND PAPAL NUNCIO DADAGLIO WITH PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND OF PAPAL NUNCIO WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA. (ONE MFA SOURCE, HOWEVER, TOLD EMBOFF TODAY THAT MFA NOW NO LONGER INVOLVED AND THAT MATTER NOW BEING HANDLED EXCLUSIVELY AT HIGHEST GOVERNMENT LEVELS.)

2. MEANWHILE BISHOP ANOVEROS AND HIS VICAR GENERAL MSGR. UBIETA, WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THEIR "PREVENTIVE HOUSE ARREST" IN BILBAO, AND DROVE TO MADRID ON MARCH 7 TO CONFER WITH THE PAPAL NUNCIO AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST. THEY MET WITH HIM AND
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OTHER PRELATES MARCH 7, AND CONTINUED TO MEET WITH THEM TODAY.

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THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THE PAIR MAY RETURN TO BILBAO TONIGHT.

3. TWO IMPORTANT MEETINGS BEING HELD TODAY, WHERE IT IS EXPECTED FATE OF ANOVEROS AND HIS VICAR GENERAL MAY BE DECIDED. THEY ARE (1) A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE, WHICH INCLUDES, INTER ALIA, CARDINALS TARANCON OF MADRID, GONZALEZ OF TOLEDO, AND JUBANY OF BARCELONA, WHICH SESSIONS ARE ALSO BEING ATTENDED BY ANOVEROS; AND (2) TODAY'S WEEKLY CABINET MEETING PRESIDED OVER BY GENERAL FFRANCO. POSSIBLE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS RELATING TO THIS CRISIS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ISSUED TONIGHT FOLLOWING UPON THESE MEETINGS.

4. COMMENT: CURRENT PHASE OF INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY TOUGHNESS OF BOTH SIDES, WITH VATICAN (BACKED BY SPANISH EPISCOPATE) ALLEGEDLY REFUSING TO AGREE TO FORCIBLE EXPULSION OR TRANSFER OF ANOVEROS AT THIS TIME AND GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY UNWILLING TO ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS. ALLEGEDLY, VATICAN HAS SERIOUSLY THREATENED THE GOVERNMENT WITH POSSIBLE EXCOMMUNICATION, AND GOVERNMENT HAS THREATENED TO CANCEL UNILATERALLY THE 1953 CONCORDAT. IT STILL BELIEVED SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT EITHER OF THESE THREATS WOULD BE CARRIED OUT.

5. MORE LIKELY THAT CURRENT STRENUOUS NEGOTIATION WILL PRODUCE SOME FORM OF COMPROMISE MINIMALLY ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES AND DEFUSE THE CURRENT CHARGED SITUATION. VARIOUS POSSIBIOITIES ARE CURRENTLY BEING RUMORED AS SOLUTIONS INCLUDING: (1) THAT THE VTICAN WOULD GRANT THE GOVERNMENT PERMISSION TO PROSECUTE ANOVEROS, BUT NOT EXPEL HIM; (2) POSSIBILITY ANOVEROS WOULD IN THE COMING MONTHS BE "KICKED UPSTAIRS" BY BEING PROMOTED TO SOME OTHER NOMINALLY MORE IMPORTANT POST WITHIN THE SPANISH CHURCH HIERARCHY EITHER IN SPAIN OR PERHAPS IN ROMAN CURIA; (3) A POSSIBLE SCHEME WHEREBY ANOVEROS WOULD REMAIN NOMINALLY AS BISHOP OF BILBAO FOR THE TIME BEING BUT WOULD BE GIVEN A SPECIAL IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT TO COORDINATE THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE'S PREPARATION IN THE OCTOBER BISHOPS' SYNOD IN ROME (THIS ASSIGNMENT WOULD KEEP ANOVEROS SHUTTLING BETWEEN MADRID AND ROME, BUT WOULD LARGELY KEEP HIM OUT OF BILBAO); (4) CONFIDENTIAL

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ANOVEROS MIGHT TAKE A "VACATION" OF A WEEK OR MORE AT HIS NATIVE VILLAGE IN NAVARRE, WHILE FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE ARE CONTINUED BEWEEN CHURCH AND STATE; OR (5) ANOVEROS WOULD BE LEFT, AT LEAST NOMINALLY, IN PLACE, BUT SOME ARRANGEMENT WOULD BW WORKED OUT WHEREBY VATICAN WOULD SHORTLY, OR WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, TRANSFER PAPAL NUNCIO DADAGLIO, WHO IS ALSO ONE OF PRINCIPAL OBJECTS OF GOVERNMENT'S IRE, AND WHOSE REMOVAL VATICAN MIGHT ACCEPT MORE EASILY THAN THAT OF ANOVEROS.

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6. WHILE THE CHURCH-STATE CRISIS CONTINUES AT ITS WORST POINT IN RECENT MEMORY, RUMORS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE ABOUT THE POSSIBLE RESIGNATION OF CABINET MINISTERS AS A RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT MISHANDLING OF THE CRISIS (AND ALSO RELATED TO THE MARCH 2 EXECUTIONS OF ANARCHIST PUIG ANTICH AND POLISH SEAMAN HEINZ CHEZ). THE MOST PERSISTENTLY MENTIONED MINISTERS WHO IT IS RUMORED MIGHT BE MADE THE SCAPEGOATS FOR THE CURRENT CRISIS AND FORCED TO RESIGN (IT HAS ALSO BEEN RUMORED THAT THEY IN FACT WANT TO RESIGN OUT OF DISCONFORMITY WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THE MATTER) ARE JUSTICE MINISTER RUIZ JARABO AND INFORMATION MINISTER CABANILLAS. ADDING FUEL TO THE RUMORS OF A POSSIBLE IMPENDING RESIGNATION OF PIO CABANILLAS, IS A "MATESA" TYPE S ANDAL REPORTEDLY SUDDENLY BEING UN-COVERED IN CABANILLAS' NATIVE PROVINCE OF ORENSE INVOLVING ALLEGED EXTENSIVE MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT BANKS AND FUNDS IN WHICH CABANILLAS REPORTEDLY MAY BE IMPLICATED.
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